

Designing Curricula to Reduce Food Wasted by Students in Indiana Elementary Schools

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My master's thesis will involve designing a unit of lesson plans that Indiana elementary instructors can use to teach their students about food waste and food waste reduction strategies, and then evaluating the effectiveness of this unit. I have successfully designed and pilot tested two of three intended lessons with two classrooms at Mayflower Mill Elementary School in West Lafayette through the FNR 498 course, "The Nature of Service Learning". I will use the feedback from these pilot tests to revise and improve my lesson plans before helping teachers present them for my study. I will not reuse the classrooms that we used for this course to prevent bias in my results. Next, I will design a survey to be administered to students before and after the unit is presented. This survey will quantify any changes in student knowledge or attitudes about food waste, presumably as a result of the food waste unit. Lastly, I will measure the food wasted in my study classrooms' cafeterias before and after the education is delivered. I will collaborate with the schools to only measure the food wasted by the classrooms participating in the study. I have not chosen my study schools or classrooms, but am in the process of establishing relationships with educators in local schools. The main goal of this study is to create an effective unit of lesson plans about food waste to be published on the Purdue Nature of Teaching website and be used by other Indiana instructors. I hypothesize that if students are presented with my unit of food waste lesson plans, then they will reduce the food that they waste in their cafeteria.